



HOFSTRA  
PRIDE AND PURPOSE

## HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

**The African Studies Program**

and the

**The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures**

cordially invite you to

### Speaking of African Material Cultures and Histories: A Workshop for New Research in African Studies

**Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**1:30-6 p.m.**

**Leo A. Guthart Cultural Center Theater, First Floor**

**Joan and Donald E. Axinn Library, South Campus**

**1-2 p.m. – Buffet Lunch**

**2-5 p.m. – Presentation of Projects**

**5-6 p.m. – Q&A Discussion and Coffee**

#### Panelists:

**ALBA VALENCIANO MAÑÉ**, *CSIC, Spain. Visiting Faculty Research Fellow, Hofstra University, Fall 2010.* **Between mimicry and difference: exploring clothing and identities in Equatorial Guinea.** This presentation will take some ethnographic examples as the starting point in order to analyze how, through dress, the identities can be constructed, imposed or resisted in Equatorial Guinea. The categories of dress that mediate these identities (African fashion and West fashion) are based on the principles of mimesis and differentiation. Far from being a contradiction, I suggest that these principles are managed depending on the specific necessities of each circumstance. I therefore propose a methodological debate about how to analyze the construction of African postcolonial identities in the global context of transnational circulation of commodities.

**SASHA NEWELL**, *Department of Sociology and Anthropology, College of the Holy Cross.* **Ivoirian Youth Culture: Indexing Excess and the Externality of Brands.** This research explores how unemployed urban youth perform successfully beyond their means in order to demonstrate their superior taste and urban savvy in Ivory Coast. Through their knowledge of American street style, they claimed greater access to modernity than the 'bosses' or Ivoirian elite who continue to dress 'French' by wearing suits, which were labeled as 'traditional' by the youth I studied. The prestige of both groups was predicated on its ability to index externality, or cosmopolitan knowledge of Beng (Europe and America). The ability to purchase authentic brands rather than fakes was proof of one's cultural knowledge of 'real' modernity.

**LLORENÇ PICORNELL GELABERT**, *University of Barcelona, Spain/Columbia University.* **Walking on Mandji. First thoughts on an anthropological and archaeological project in Equatorial Guinea.** This presentation focuses on the first results of a large research project that is just starting. During a recent survey undertaken on the Island of Mandji (known in the West as Corisco), several sites of the Early and Late Iron Age were recorded. The most spectacular discoveries are three Burial Sites, the largest of which has yielded several intact tombs with many artifacts (axes, spears, anklets, bracelets, complete pots) radiocarbon dated to 410-640 AD. At the same time, seven historical sites were recorded which potentially offer us a great opportunity to (re)construct the history of this "terra incognita" in Central West African historiography. These discoveries open an interesting dialog between local memories, scientific discourses and material culture.

**JOHN CINNAMON**, *Department of Anthropology, Miami University/Hamilton.* **Missionaries and the End of Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Gabon** When American Presbyterians arrived in the Gabon Estuary in June 1842, they encountered a world where British, American, and French anti-slavery efforts, as well as early French colonial imposition. They were also struck by an ongoing Atlantic slave trade as well as widespread African slavery. This presentation explores the perspectives of two American missionaries: John Leighton Wilson, from South Carolina, who founded the Gabon mission in 1842, and Robert Hamill Nassau, who served in present-day Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Cameroon from 1861 to 1906. Both men provide significant insights into processes of enslavement, the experiences of the enslaved, and anti-slavery efforts, as well as into the moral ambivalence of US Americans in the age of emancipation.

#### Discussant:

**Cécile Stephanie Stehrenberger**, *University of Zurich, Switzerland*

This event is **free** and open to Hofstra and non-Hofstra faculty members and interested scholars. The workshop is organized by Benita Sampedro Vizcaya, *Romance Languages and Literatures* and Renoir McDonaugh, *African Studies Program*. Co-Sponsored by the Department of Anthropology and the Hofstra Cultural Center.

For more information, please contact either Benita.Sampedro@hofstra.edu; Gabrielle.R.McDonaugh@hofstra.edu; Athelene.A.Collins@hofstra.edu.